



Delegation of the European Union



Permanent Mission of Spain

Statement on behalf of the European Union

By

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CSD18 - 18th session of the COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**SIDS day – afternoon session on the review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (Prep-Com for
MIS+5)**

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to the United Nations**

CSD18 - 18th session of the COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SIDS day – afternoon session on CSD thematic issues

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

1. The EU highly welcomes the opportunity of addressing the specific difficulties of Small Island Developing States in the context of this year thematic discussions in CSD and in the context of the 5 year review of the Mauritius Strategy. The EU and its Member States have a long standing concern for the difficult conditions that SIDS face in addressing their most vital challenges, taking into due account SIDS' increased vulnerabilities: adaptation to climate change, promoting renewable energies, making a shift to more sustainable agriculture, protection of fragile ecosystems, and overcoming isolation and vulnerabilities (like expensive transport costs and communications, access to and provision of financial resources, access to science and technology, waste management, freshwater and land resources...).

The EU and its member States regard SIDS as a major partner with whom we share common ambition when addressing the international agenda, particularly on sustainable development issues.

2. The CSD is the forum where SIDS' commitments were bolstered and encouraged. Therefore, the EU has always supported the SIDS day as an integral part of the CSD Programme. Regarding the cluster of issues of the present CSD cycle, there are themes which are of high relevance to SIDS. Indeed, the MSI includes specific chapters devoted to **management of waste, transport, chemicals, or sustainable production and consumption**, and **mining** is a relevant issue within the Land Resources chapter. The EU financially supports some of the efforts that are being made by SIDS in these areas and I refer to those a bit later.

3. Finally, and as I said, this is a special and significant year in our CSD discussions on SIDS, since we are expected to prepare the ground for the review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy organised by the General Assembly in September. We should be able to determine what are the main obstacles and challenges that

prevent us from making further progress as well as to use the opportunity to renew our commitment with these countries. The EU is ready to work with SIDS in identifying the main implementation gaps.

4. Climate Change is undoubtedly one of the major challenges that SIDS face. Extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels threaten the very existence of some island and their livelihoods, posing additional development challenges and may have significant security implications for this group of countries. We are well aware that the climate change challenge has not diminished and further work should follow a tight time schedule with clear deadlines considering SIDS' needs. In this regard, the EU and its Member States will work to reach a comprehensive and global legally-binding agreement under the UNFCCC that builds on the Kyoto protocol, incorporates all its essentials and includes all countries that are major emitters in the upcoming negotiations.

For the "fast start" funding, developed countries have committed themselves to providing resources approaching 30 billion USD in the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation and with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable, such as the least developed countries, small island States and Africa in accordance with the Copenhagen Accord, which provides the basis for significant short term and long term financing of climate action.

5. On Waste Management, many SIDS have important difficulties in terms of financial and technical capacity in dealing with waste management issues. Different types of wastes threaten Small Island Developing States' ecological integrity. Efforts must be undertaken to strengthen the control of the trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes, especially through the enhancement of activities under the Basel Convention. It is essential to promote sustainable waste management and to promote national, regional and international cooperation to reduce the quantity of waste disposed of at sea.

6. The management of chemicals is also closely interlinked with waste management matters. In this regard, promising approaches include composting of organic waste which produces substitutes for chemical fertilizers, as well as conversion of waste into energy fuels and irrigation water through fermentation, thermal conversion, and low temperature pyrolysis. The EU under the 9th EDF Intra ACP Capacity Building Programme for the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (21 Mln €), includes a component to strengthen capacity in participating countries to meet obligations under the MEAs in the field of chemicals and wastes – such as the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions. This is certainly of interest for Small Island Developing States

7. Transport remains an important challenge for SIDS to overcome the handicap of their remoteness and improve the competitiveness of their smaller and distanced markets. In analogy to landlocked countries, SIDS are “sea-locked” relying mainly on air and maritime transport connections. However, while reliable, cheap, frequent

efficient transportation is key, required transport will need to be developed in a sustainable manner. Consequently, regionalism and regionalization in transport may prove to be important instruments for effectively addressing the challenges of SIDS's geographic remoteness, small size and lower transport volumes.

8. The issue of **Sustainable Production and Consumption** (SCP) should also raise interest in Small Island States as it looks for ways of "*minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life-cycle so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.*" The green growth focus on improving eco-efficiency promotes environmental sustainability, will lower SIDS exposure to environmental degradation and help therefore reduce their environmental vulnerability. The EU last call for proposals under the environment thematic programme includes 7 million Euro for Sustainable production / consumption and waste, which is open to SIDS countries.

9. Land is a scarce resource in the SIDS. In this regard, **mining** could represent an additional pressure in land use. In many areas customary and indigenous lands are under pressure from outside interests such as incoming agribusiness, timber and mining companies. Dealing with mining and SIDS requires therefore the linking of environmental, social and economic issues. Considering this, mining projects should ensure compliance with best practices and, where impacts are negative, (such as coastal erosion and pollution), consider mitigation measures. On the other hand, awareness and participation is required when dealing with mining tenement issues and raising land "ownership". The EU promotes consensual land policy processes and supports collaboration between State, civil society, bilateral and multilateral stakeholders, with the ultimate objective of pro-poor land governance. Due to dependency on marine resources, integrated approaches to governance may be needed that include mining, fisheries, biodiversity, energy, and shipping. Finally and economically speaking, most SIDS that benefited from financial inflows due to mining profits seem to have suffered from the "Dutch disease" phenomenon (the reduction in the competitiveness of their manufacturing sector following the increase in revenues from natural resources by the raising of the exchange rate) and communities living in affected areas may have greatly suffered from land losses and mining related health problems. It is therefore most important in these countries to provide incentives for economic diversification by developing other sectors that minimise the dependence on the mining sector and by improving the competitiveness the manufacturing sector.

10. The EU underscores the need for **urgent implementation** of the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. While Small Island Developing States have largely made progress in formulating and implementing strategies and policies to advance sustainable development, there are still **important challenges ahead**. **Regional efforts** must be **encouraged and complemented by the international community's response particularly**

regarding **capacity building, technology transfer and the financial resources mobilisation**. The UE and its Member States supports SIDS in addressing these challenges.